

Division of Counties Has Never Been Known to Result in Any Good to Tax Payers.

The Division of Counties is Usually the Result of
Rival Political Factions Fighting Each Other
and the Tax Payers are Those Who
Are Made to Suffer.

Mr. Jordan says that taxes in DeSoto county have been gradually increasing ever since the division of Manatee county, when DeSoto county was created. If this is true, then it is the strongest possible reason why DeSoto county should not be divided, for if that division produced a gradual increase in taxes, is it not reasonable to suppose that the division of DeSoto county would produce another increase in taxes? Mr. Jordan nor any other man advocating the division of DeSoto county can show that the division of counties in this state has ever resulted in a reduction of taxes.

Mr. Jordan can no doubt show that in some of the smaller counties of the state the rate of taxation (the millage) is lower than it is in DeSoto county, but Mr. Jordan knows that the assessed valuation of the property in these small counties is much higher proportionately than it is in DeSoto county. It is a well known fact that the valuations placed on the taxable property of DeSoto county is about the lowest of any in the State of Florida, and this means a big saving to the tax payers of the county, for this reason, that when the property is assessed high, and the rate of taxation is made low, each tax payer pays to the state a larger amount of tax than he would pay if the valuation of his property was made low, and the rate of taxation high.

In DeSoto county the assessed valuation of the property is low and the rate of taxation is higher than it is in some of the other counties of the state, therefore, in DeSoto county, less than one third of the total taxes paid by each tax payer goes to the state, while in Pasco, Citrus, Lake and some of the other small counties about fifty per cent or one-half of the amount of taxes of each tax payer goes to the state. In these small counties the condition is reversed from what it is in DeSoto, for in them the rate of taxation is comparatively low, while the valuations on similar classes of property is about four times as high as it is in DeSoto county. You can not buy the property of DeSoto county for four times as much as it is assessed for, yet it is an absolute fact that in many of the smaller counties of the state you can not sell the property for what it is assessed at. If DeSoto county would assess her property as high as the property is assessed in the smaller counties of the state, she could reduce her rate of taxation to one-half what it is now and collect as much taxes as she now collects.

Mr. Jordan once lived in Sumpter county, in this state, and while there he fought the division of that county to a cold finish. He probably opposed the division of that county for the reason that he was not asked to go to the legislature to divide it. Sumpter county was divided. Mr. Jordan left there and came to one of the largest (DeSoto) counties in the state, believing, no doubt, that he could do better in a large county than he could in a small one. Mr. Jordan in coming to DeSoto county after fighting the division of Sumpter county, showed his preference for large counties, for if he is so partial to small counties and believes so strongly in them, why did he not stay in the small counties in which he lived before he came to DeSoto? I know a man living in DeSoto county who owns some wild or unimproved land in Sumpter county, where Mr. Jordan once lived, and this land is assessed at \$4.00 per acre. The owner has offered to sell it for \$4.00 per acre and cannot sell it.

Mr. Jordan left the small counties in which he lived and came to DeSoto, and since by doing this he has shown his dislike for small counties we have no assurance that he would remain here if this county should be split into three small strips as Mr. Jordan purposes doing. Mr. Jordan has not done one-tenth as much toward building up DeSoto county as have the taxpayers whom he asks to support him in his efforts to tear it up and ruin it.

Most of the citizens of this county well remember the confusion and tangle of land deeds that followed the division of Manatee county and that division cost the land owners of this county thousands of dollars to get their land deeds straight after the records have been transcribed, and many of them are not yet straight and probably never will be. If the taxpayers of the county want to save themselves a whole lot of confusion, tangling of land deeds, trouble and a big increase in taxes they had best kill this scheme to tear up the county and put it in the condition that the small counties are in from which Mr. Jordan recently moved.

Respectfully yours,
N. M. SAULS.

The Brethren

By RIDER HAGGARD,
Author of "She," "King Solomon's
Mines," Etc.

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(Continued from Last Week)

"Doubtless you have heard that one of us who was so named was burned here recently as a witch? Why, foolish men, I can lay you both dead before ever those words pass your lips."

"You think you can," said Godwin, "but for my part I am sure that this is not fated, and am sure also that you do not wish to harm us any more than we wish to harm you. To be plain, then, it is necessary for us to visit Al-Je-bal. Will you aid us in this?"

"I do not know. I will tell you after four days. If you are not satisfied with that, go, denounce me, do your worst, and I will do mine, for which I should be sorry."

"Where is the security that you will not do it if we are satisfied?" asked Wulf bluntly.

"You must take the word of a daughter of Al-Je-bal. I have none other to offer," she replied.

"That may mean death," said Wulf. "You said just now that was not fated, and, although I have sought your company for my own reasons, I have no quarrel with you—as yet. Choose your own path. Still, I tell you that if you go, who, chancing to know Arabic, have learned my secret, you die, and that if you stay you are safe—at least while you are in this house. I swear it on the token of Al-Je-bal," and, bending forward, she touched the ring in Godwin's hand, "but remember that for the future I cannot answer."

Godwin and Wulf looked at each other. Then Godwin replied:

"I think that we will trust you and stay," words at which she smiled a little, as though she were pleased, then said:

"Now, if you wish to walk abroad, guests Peter and John, I will summon the slave to guide you, and in four days we will talk more of this matter of your journey, which until then had best be forgotten."

So the man came, armed with a sword, and led them out, clad in their pilgrims' robes, through the streets of this eastern town. In due course they came to the inn again, having met no one whom they knew. When the brethren were back in their chamber, seated at the far end of it and speaking very low lest they should be overheard, they consulted together long and earnestly as to what they should do. This was

clear—they and something of their mission were known, and doubtless notice of their coming would soon be given to the sultan Saladin. From the king and great Christian lords in Jerusalem they could expect little help, since to give it might be to bring about an open rupture with Saladin. True, they might try to find their way to Damascus alone, but if the sultan was warned of their coming would he not cause them to be killed upon the road or cast into some dungeon where they would languish out their lives? The more they spoke of these matters the more they were perplexed till at length Godwin said:

"Brother, our uncle bade us earnestly to seek out this Al-Je-bal, and, though it seems that to do so is very dangerous, I think that we had best obey him who may have been given foresight at the last."

CHAPTER IX.

ON the following morning when they came into the eating room of the inn Godwin and Wulf found they were no longer alone in the house, for sundry other guests sat there partaking of their morning meal. Among them was the English trader Thomas of Ipswich, who, it appeared, had intended to start for Jerusalem that morning with his goods, but the riding mule he had bought proved to be lame from a prick in the hoof, so that he must wait a few days, or so he said. Under these circumstances he offered the brethren his company in their ramblings about town. This they thought it wise not to refuse, although they felt little confidence in the man, believing that it was he who had found out their story and true names and revealed them to Masouda, either through talkativeness or with a purpose.

Important Matters

That Should Appeal to Every Tax
Payer and Voter

TAXPAYERS VS. TAX DODGERS.

Judge Cochran, in his late campaign, stated that there are in DeSoto county nearly 180,000 acres of lands, fenced and used as pastures, on which no taxes are paid, and that it has been estimated that, if these lands paid taxes even at a very low valuation, some \$20,000 a year would be added to the county's revenue. He contended that, if these lands were made to pay a fair proportion of taxes, the 26-mill rate which we are now paying would fall to about 20 mills and the taxes paid by the small land owners would be greatly reduced.

Judge Cochran said that, if nominated and elected to the legislature, he would do his best to secure the enactment of a law that would force the owners (or claimants) of this vast amount of lands to pay their just proportion of taxes. This caused these men to combine and defeat him, and now they are using the county division issue to try and defeat A. P. Jordan, who has repeatedly declared in public that he stood with Judge Cochran on this issue and, if nominated and elected, would use his best efforts to carry through the legislature the bill proposed by Judge Cochran to compel these pasture owners to pay taxes on the lands which they have fenced and are using.

If the honest taxpayer will closely study the situation, he will discover that every one of these owners (or claimants) of big pastures on which no taxes are paid, is working hard to defeat Jordan, and they give as their reason that they do not want the county divided. In the next breath, they will say that Jordan, if elected, can't get the legislature to pass a bill to divide the county. If not, why are they working against him?

Will the taxpayers permit themselves to be fooled by the tax dodgers?

FACTS VS. THEORIES.

The opponents of county division have given us many figures based on theories and a lot of labored calculations to scare the timid and deceive the unthinking, but they have never denied and will not deny the fact that all the small counties are managed at less expense than the large ones.

They may figure and figure and theorize and argue, but the fact remains, undisputed and indisputable, in cold type in the State Comptroller's report for 1905. That report shows that these small counties, viz: Baker, Citrus, Franklin, Hernando, Holmes, Liberty, Pasco and Wakulla—with an assessment of less than a million dollars each, are conducted on a tax rate of from 5 to 9 mills less than DeSoto's.

Calhoun, Gadsden, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Nassau and Sumter, each with an assessment valuation of less than a million and a half dollars, enjoy a tax rate of from 14 to 19 mills, while DeSoto pays 26.

The Comptroller's report shows that all the big counties pay a higher tax rate than the small ones.

Each of the new counties which it is proposed to make out of DeSoto will have taxable property of nearly a million and a quarter dollars, which is ample to sustain a county organization and maintain schools and good roads, and that, too, at a lower tax rate than we are now paying.

The esteemed Arcadia News tells the people that the result of the late primary has been to eliminate all issues except that of county division. This is a serious mistake. The issue raised by Judge Cochran to restore to the tax books about 180,000 acres of pasture lands on which no taxes are paid, is still a very live one of vast importance to the taxpayers, and it is well known that A. P. Jordan stands squarely with Judge Cochran on that issue.

Vote for your interests by voting for A. P. JORDAN for the legislature.